

More Mound Memories



photo credit: Ken Hastings

The Mounds of Mound City

The following story is by Ruby McDonald Compton

Henry Samuel Alexander and his wife, Sarah Simonda Miles Alexander brought their children and moved into the Midway area in 1869. They lived there for several years before moving to Heber.

The oldest girl of the family was named Sarah Henryetta Alexander, but was called Nettie from the day of her birth. Nettie was my grandmother. She told me that she had made friends with the other children in the near-by settlement of Mound City, on upper Snake Creek.

The favorite pastime of the children was to climb atop the mounds and spring around on the tough, springy, moss that covered the mounds. One day, one of the older boys decided to place a long slender tree trunk across the top of one of the taller mounds. He wanted the youngsters to learn how to "walk the log". He reasoned that if they slipped they would have a short fall and a soft landing.

The idea was good, but the boy was not as strong as he thought he was. As he extended the small end of the tree trunk across the mound, the trunk slipped from his hands, and pierced the tough, springy moss and showed the water in a deep crater.

The children were all excited about their discovery and hurried home to tell their parents.

The adults were frightened and organized to clear the moss from all the mounds for fear that the children would play on them again.

Grandmother said that it was a long time before they found anything as interesting to do as the playing on the mounds had been. The moss has never regrown to this day!

The Other Hot Pot Resort

Midway at one time, had another rather famous "Hot Pot" resort. The following was told by Henry S. Coleman.

"Way up against the hill where those houses are now being built (Interlaken) just at the edge, there is a lot of pot rock formation. We called it the "Warm Land". There's a spring there where sometime around 1880 or along in there; a fellow by the name of Murdock put in a resort. It was a big one. They had a big pavillion, a big dance hall, a restaurant, and they had a saloon. They also had a place where they use to have horse races. They had a ball ground, and they use to have balloon ascensions in the summer. It was THE big resort. People from Park City, I recall, would come over in a six team wagon that had five or six seats in it. And the miners would come over on weekends or holidays by the score and it was a big affair. But he went broke in the depressions long about '98 or during Cleveland's time and finally it just disintegrated and went to pieces."

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photo credit: Ken Hastings

re, a feeling the Warnock fam-
in the Blue Boar Inn, Heber
fast, located at the entrance of

merly called the Huckleberry
n in 1997 by the Kelson fami-
Kelsons wanted to provide a
r children and extended fami-
family became involved in the

property. Wade, another son,
emes for each of the 14 rooms,
authors like Jane Austin and
oom was furnished with a fire-
l, a jetted-tub or aroma-thera-
nd-carved European furniture

ertakings, the original owners
obstacles along the way. The
of Midway's main water line
man vandalized all the hand-
ding, and three different crews

seemingly frustrating barriers,

the Kelsons had supporters also. "The Midway City Council and Planning Commission was very accommodating," Wade Kelson remembers. Even the Homestead's general manager, Britt Mathwick, became the Kelson's biggest ally, giving suggestions about operational details and helping them with zoning regulations.

The exquisite craftsmanship of the Blue Boar Inn immediately sets a warm and inviting atmosphere upon entering the 9,500 square foot premise. The building has a Euro-Americana theme, the details of which one can see firsthand in the imported Italian tile work, a kachelhofen oven from Austria, hand-made chairs, beds and armoires built on-site, lighting from Venice, and original artwork filling the walls. Several of the rooms have wool carpeting imported from Britain. Antiques from the Shauna Varvel collection, a Heber Valley antique and import store, join an endless array of fine furniture and surroundings. The wall paintings and outside fresco works, hand made, were created by Judy Roosendaal, of Midway City. Roosendaal has also painted a rendition of "Jack and the Beanstalk," spiraling its way up an elevator shaft.

"Not a single expense has been spared," Valerie Kelson said when the inn first opened to the public.

Although the inn's make-up is mostly imported materials, the work was done by local craftsmen. "That's part of the real story behind the whole place," Wade says. "This was done by the craftsmen who live in the valley and so it's a real tribute to them."

The new owners have continued the inn's high-end tradition. Although the name has changed, the charm and elegant surroundings continue to draw guests from all over. The "Blue Boar" name was derived by the new owners from countless European establishments called by the same name. In addition, the Blue Boar Inn is mentioned in the story of Robin Hood. A replica of an 18th Century blue boar statue in Florence, Italy sits at entrance of the inn's grounds.

The Warnocks have added a full-service restaurant, open for lunch and dinner everyday except Mondays. The Truffle Hollow, a new addition to the restaurant, acts as an offset romantic getaway to the main restaurant where a lighter fare of European cuisine compliments an impressive menu. The chef, Jesse Layman, has worked in fine restaurants in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Cabo San Lucas. The menu changes daily and reservations are preferred. The restaurant's October Fest and Fon Due celebrations highlight the year's seasons.

In addition to inside changes, the Warnocks have added gardens on the south end of the building and new parking. The inn is situated at the base of the majestic Snake Creek Canyon, and is literally a stone's throw from Utah's most popular state park and golf course—Wasatch Mountain State Park.

The Blue Boar Inn's prices start at \$150 per night. Bridal and honeymoon suites, such as the Elizabeth and Robert Browning room, cost \$295 a night. Family or corporate retreats, and wedding parties, are a common occurrence.

The inn's fame is already spreading, from nearby Midway residents and Wasatch Front visitors to far-away vacationers from Switzerland and Australia. Even the Salt Lake Organizing Committee has already held meetings at the Inn's library, a cherry wood rendition of Thomas Jefferson's library at Monticello.

"Service to our guests is an important aspect," say Innkeepers Jay and Sandy Niederhauser. "It's just not renting a room, it's a total experience."